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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0479

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 2089

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ASEC, ELAB, AR
SUBJECT: LABOR MOVES TOWARDS POLITICAL SHOWDOWN

REF: A) BA-2029, B) BA-1958, C) BA-1966, AND D) BA-2006

1. DURING EVENING MARCH 24 THE CGT LEADERSHIP AND 62 ORGANIZATIONS WITH NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL LEADERS PRESENT MET TO REVIEW THE "POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC REALITIES" FACING THE COUNTRY. DURING THE MEETING, WHICH WAS CLOSED TO THE PRESS, THIS CONCLAVE OF TOP LABOR LEADERS PRODUCED TWO DOCUMENTS. THE FIRST WAS PUBLISHED AS A PAID ADVERTISEMENT ON MARCH 25. THE SECOND, A"SECRET" DOCUMENT, WILL BE GIVEN TO MRS. PERON BY LABOR LEADERS IN A MEETING LABOR IS TRYING URGENTLY TO SCHEDULE.

2. THE DOCUMENT PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S PRESS MAKES TWO OVER-RIDING POINTS: 1) THE LABOR MOVEMENT REAFFIRMS ITS TOTAL AND UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR MRS. PERON AND 2) LABOR DEMANDS THAT CERTAIN UNNAMED BUT HIGH OFFICIALS HAVE THEIR AMBITIONS CURBED.
LABOR OFFICIALS TOLD NEWSMEN THAT IN SECRET DOCUMENTS LABOR WULD DEMAND THAT SEVERAL VERY HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE.
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THIS PUBLIC DOCUMENT IS BEING INTERPRETED BY POLITICAL

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OBSERVERS AS BEING THE BEGINNING OF THE FINAL ACT IN
LABOR'S EFFORTS TO REMOVE LOPEZ REGA, GOMEZ MORALES,
AND PERHAPS ONE OR TWO OTHER KEY OFFICIALS FROM THE
PRESENT CABINET, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME AFFIRMING TO
MRS. PERON LABOR'S WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO FILL THE
VOID THEREBY CAUSED.

3. IN CONVERSATIONS EARLIER IN THE DAY OF MARCH 24,
EMBOFFS TALKED TO CONTACTS FROM DIVERGENT POLITICAL
PARTIES. SOURCES AGREED THAT LABOR MOVEMENT WAS MOVING
QUICKLY TO FORCE SHOWDOWN OVER LOPEZ REGA. TWO QUESTIONS
WHICH PREOCCUPIED ALL OBSERVERS WERE A) WHETHER OR NOT
LABOR'S EFFORTS TO BRING DOWN LOPEZ REGA COULD BE
CARRIED OUT WITHOUT ALSO BRINGING DOWN MRS. PERON; AND
B) WHILE SOURCES VOICED SYMPATHY WITH LABOR EFFORTS RE
LOPEZ REGA, ALL VOICED CONCERN THAT THEY MIGHT BE REPLACING
A DESPISED INDIVIDUAL WITH A POWERFUL INSTITUTION WHOSE
ACTIONS ONCE IN POWER MIGHT PROVE EQUALLY UNPALATABLE.
ONE WELL CONNECTED POLITICAL COLUMNIST TOLD EMBOFF THAT MOVE
TO GET LOPEZ REGA WAS EFFORT IN WHICH OPPOSITION PARTIES,
LABOR AND LARGE SECTORS OF POLITICAL PERONISM HAD NOW
JOINED. IF MOMENTUM OF THIS MOVEMENT IS MAINTAINED, AND
SOURCE CONVINCED IT WOULD BE, HE PREDICTED "MAJOR CABINET
CHANGES SHORTLY."
COMMENT. FROM TONE OF CGT-62 DOCUMENT ISSUED LAST NIGHT,
FEW OBSERVERS QUESTION THAT LOPEZ REGA IS PRINCIPLE
TARGET OF LABOR DRIVE. FURTHER, BALBIN INTERVIEW (SEE
REF A) AND TORRENT OF CRITICISM AGAINST LOPEZ REGA
LOOSED BY MINORITY PARTIES INDICATES AT VERY LEAST THAT
MOST POLITICIANS SCENT BLOOD AND BELIEVE LOPEZ REGA'S
SCALP CAN NOW BE HAD. MAJOR QUESTION FOR THOSE SEEKING
TO OUST LOPEZ REGA REMAINS ATTITUDE OF MRS. PERON. IF
SHE ACCEPTS EXPECTED ULTIMATUM CONTAINED IN LABOR'S SECRET
DOCUMENT, POLITICAL SOURCES HERE BELIEVE MATTER WILL BE
RESOLVED QUICKLY AND QUIETLY. IF SHE BALKS AT DEMANDS TO
REMOVE HER PRIVATE SECRETARY, OR SUBMITS HER OWN RESIGNATION,
VERY TENSE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE WILL ENSUE. THE ROLE
OF LASTIRI AND ROCAMORA IN THIS AFFAIR REMAINS SOMEWHAT OBSCURE.
ACCORDING TO ONE WELL CONNECTED SOURCE, BOTH MEN, WHO REPRESENT
POLITICAL BRANCH OF PERONISM, REALIZED LATE LAST WEEK THAT
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LABOR HAD TAKEN RESOLVE TO OUST LOPEZ REGA, ON OWN HOOK
IF NECESSARY. GIVEN THEIR OWN PROBLEMS WITH LABOR OVER
LATTER'S DEMANDS FOR INCREASED INFLUENCE AT EXPENSE OF
POLITICAL PERONISTS, BOTH DECIDED SOME ACTION TO BOLSTER
THEIR STANDING WITH LABOR NECESSARY. ROCAMORA APPARENTLY
CHOSE TO CURRY LORENZO MIGUEL'S FAVOR BY USING POLICE
AGAINST CLASSIST-LED UOM LOCALE IN ROSARIO, VILLA CONSTITUTION
AREA. APPARENTLY IT WAS THIS WHICH WAS BEHIND THE

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PUZZLING ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY ROCAMORA ON MARCH 20 CONCERNING
THE "MASSIVE PLOT" IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS ALONG PARANA RIVER
(SEE REFS B AND C). LASTIRI'S RESPONSE IS LESS CLAR.
HOWEVER, OVER PAST FEW DAYS HE HAS MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH
MIGUEL, ONCE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 24 SHORTLY BEFORE LABOR
ISSUED ITS PUBLIC DECLARATION, A CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH
AROUSES SUSPICION THAT HE HAS GIVEN AT LEAST TACIT
SUPPORT TO MIGUEL. WHILE EMBASSY STILL BELIEVES IT TOO
PREMATURE TO PREDICT LOPEZ REGA'S EMINENT OUSTER, IT IS
CLEAR HE AND PERONIST POLITICIANS ARE FOR DIFFERENT
REASONS FACING MOST SERIOUS CRISIS SINCE MAY 73 ASSUMPTION
OF POWER. AT THIS POINT, MRS. PERON'S PERSONAL REACTION
TO LABOR'S DEMANDS WOULD SEEM TO HOLD KEY TO LOPEZ REGA'S
FATE AND FUTURE MAKEUP OF THIS GOVERNMENT.
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